

From: Peter Black
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/15/02 7:00am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom It May Concern:

The proposed settlement with Microsoft is neither fair nor appropriate, and rewards monopolistic behaviour that has destroyed many companies and severely distorted the market for software. Actions to date have failed to understand the breadth of Microsoft's monopoly, or the ways in which they continue to enforce it.

In particular, the Office package is used highly successfully to reduce the ability of users to change operating systems platforms. Microsoft should be ordered to place the Microsoft Office file formats (for Excel, Access, Word, Powerpoint) in the public domain, and to be given equal voting rights with a range of parties for changes in this format. Microsoft should be forced to maintain adherence to this structure as its primary file format.

Such a change would make it immediately possible for others (such as StarOffice or WordPerfect) to use the same format, either as its principal storage mechanism or for interchange. Competition would then be based on the best software tools on the best platform, rather than the lock-in that is created by Microsoft's frequent changes to an unpublished format.

This change would be far more effective than any other remedy, and should be extended to open publication of all file formats for any product that Microsoft produces.

Sincerely
Peter Black

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